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TAGS: [ARF](#) [RP](#) [PREL](#) [ASEAN](#) [MARR](#)  
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES OFFERS VIEWS ON ASEAN DEFENSE  
MINISTERS MEETING PLUS

REF: STATE 9004

Classified By: Political Counselor Thomas B. Gibbons, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Per reftel, poloff on February 8 met with Hans Siriban, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Special Assistant to Undersecretary for Policy Enrique Manalo, to seek the Philippine government's views on ASEAN defense cooperation and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). Siriban said that the Philippine government sees the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and the establishment of the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) mechanism as "natural developments" in the organization's continuing evolution. Siriban outlined the Philippines' support for the ADMM in terms of the following principles: that ASEAN would be a driving force behind ADMM, that ADMM was not a military alliance, and that ADMM would respect the principles of sovereignty, noninterference, and consensus. The Philippine government believes that, by involving ASEAN Dialogue Partners, ADMM-Plus would adhere to the same approach. According to Siriban, the Philippine military is reluctant to discuss ADMM-Plus and wants to "calibrate its position" on ADMM-Plus as it assesses how ADMM functions and develops. Siriban believes that ADMM-Plus will be more inclusive than the Shangri-La Dialogue, and thus will eventually become more important.

12. (C) Siriban stated the following specific positions on behalf of the DFA. The Philippines hopes for a clearer plan to develop the ADMM-Plus over the next three years; the chairmanship of ADMM and ADMM-Plus should be the same; defense ministers would determine the extent and level of their interaction; ADMM-Plus should complement and add value to the ADMM; and involvement of extra-regional actors would require consensus of all ASEAN members. Siriban said that the Philippine government viewed regional defense cooperation positively, but that ADMM-Plus should be guided by the goal of developing collective responsibilities and common understanding of regional security challenges. The Philippine government does not view the ADMM as a means of counterbalancing the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), over which foreign ministries have more influence; rather, Siriban assessed that ADMM and ADMM-Plus were slow to develop because defense ministries of ASEAN countries were simply the last ministries to engage in direct dialogue with one another.

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